

December 11, 2009

RPAC,

Please accept this letter as a formal request to have General Services review and modify the snow plowing policy surrounding the skating pond at White Park for the upcoming winter season.

In winters past, General Services has pushed the snow away from the pond perimeter to clear the pond for skating. It is our opinion that the plowing of the green areas on the north and south sides of the pond causes damage to the underlying surface requiring extra maintenance and longer recovery time in the spring. Because of this damage we request that General Services establishes a new policy that limits the distance snow is plowed away from the pond perimeter to only that distance that is reasonably necessary to keep the pond surface available for skating. Based on several years of close observation in high snowfall total winters, current distances plowed from the pond's perimeter seem excessive by at least double the length necessary to achieve this goal.

A second reason for the policy review request is that in addition to the damage to the green areas caused by plowing, users of the skating pond also drive their vehicles onto the cleared areas to get closer to the pond while skating, causing more damage. With the recent capital improvements to the parking area (better conditions and closer proximity to the pond), parking outside the confines of the new parking lot should be discouraged by reduced perimeter plowing guidelines.

A timely benefit of the modification to this policy is the reduction of staff-hours required for skating pond maintenance in these lean budgetary times. Perhaps those saved hours can be redeployed to other areas of park or city maintenance in the demanding winter months, such as sidewalk plowing.

We hope that you will consider this request with urgency as winter is now upon us. Perhaps a trial run for this winter will provide a clearer picture of the benefits of such a policy change and can be open for review going forward. If we can assist the city in any way regarding the implementation and monitoring of the effectiveness of such guidelines please let us know.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

For the Friends of White Park,

Jeff Trombly, Chair